

Thank you allowing me to speak today. I am a member of both Military Poisons and DUMP , as well as several other "Water Warrior" organizations, I have 45+ years in health care and I am an "end user" of outdoor bodies of water. My involvement in this arena has a long history. And thank you all for being willing to sit through what has been weeks of very depressing testimony, about a topic where there is no good news, very little hope and no easy solutions. Certainly not ones that are going to please "all the people". Those of us who have been immersed in water health, people health and pollution for many years have at least had time to learn incrementally, absorb slowly, question constantly and take sanity breaks when we need to do so. You are being asked to take a crash course and pick up your PhD's on the way out. And be the change we are all demanding.

Most of the information you have heard is about the pfas family of chemicals, how they are used by all of us unknowingly in thousands of products to floss our teeth, moisturize our skin, cook food, repair our homes, spray our yards with pfas infused pesticides and poison ourselves. You have heard how babies in utero are already "contaminated" because we, as adults are. The "ubiquitous shrug" of "it's everywhere" is not a useful response. Although I do understand the overwhelm that creates it. You have heard that VT has only 1 landfill, located on the shores of a reservoir, an international lake slap in the middle of wetlands, and a northern flowing watershed. And a serious leachate problem! No city/WWTF wants to take that, a toxic soup of heavy metals, pfas chemicals, endocrine disruptors, and assorted other poisons. We know that Dilution is not the Solution to Pollution. We know that running leachate through WWTF does not remove the "forever chemicals", that discharging the effluent (liquid) into waterways is a dangerous "soup sharing" practice, and returning the solid waste to the landfill is no solution for dealing with concentrated poison. Spreading solid waste onto land and pretending it is "organic matter" and therefore beneficial is insane. And yes, we are doing that. Still. Fortunately Maine has just stopped this practice, very publicly, and we can hope VT will follow quickly. 10 years ago Water Activists were before this committee trying to get that stopped. Maybe some of you were on this committee then too. Vindication. But vindication delayed is bitter sweet, yes, those activists were correct. But the damage done to all of us in the intervening decade is enormous.

The real question again is what do we do now that we know this class of chemicals is highly toxic and persistent. That is why they are called "forever" chemicals. We know they bioaccumulate - in our

bodies, in our water, in the land. We know that the food we eat is already contaminated - there is uptake from contaminated soil. We know that meat and fish have measurable levels of pfas. The same is true for game. We can look at the modern coal mine canaries (cats with thyroid disease, water creatures with ambiguous genitalia, specific human cancers such as testicular, decreased penis size, diminished fertility) and carry on doing what we are doing or we can take that deep breath and drastically change course.

Yes, we need to "monitor" people, water and other forms of life. But monitoring without action is a cop out. Unless we want to accelerate the demise of life forms! Monitoring without accountability for those polluting changes nothing. We know without doubt about the toxicity of the chemicals. And have known since the early 70's. Providing bottled water in perpetuity (a recent solution for the St Gobain pfas issue) is a bandaid, if we assume the bottled water is pfas free. Endpoint solutions/responses are necessary but are not changing anything. Instead of looking for the "safest" amount of poison in the water we drink, the food we eat, the clothes we wear etc. We need to go after the manufacturers who poison with abandon. Expecting the rest of us to clean up their messes is absurd. We pay for the "privilege" of being poisoned and then we are expected to pay for clean-up? There is something seriously wrong with with this thinking as a model of the world.

The question is how to do that.

As you will have noted that most of those testifying and walking the halls here in Montpelier, or protesting politely outside are local people, often seniors who are retired and therefore can take workplace hours to raise issues. Or those directly impacted by illnesses unquestionably connected to pfas - until they have to prove it and satisfy an unbalanced legal system. Do we even make a dent compared with paid lobbyists that the Corporations keep on their payrolls, a worthwhile investment for them to "help" overburdened legislators get access to (carefully curated) information? Offering litigation as a route to solving the pfas problems is a joke. A joke. Most of those impacted will be dead before any action is seen inside a courtroom. A totally unaffordable option for the majority of the human race. A class action suit? That is decades away and meanwhile we will still be bathing in pfas and whatever synergistic interactions the "family" has with other chemicals. The Corporate model of change is one that involves lots of litigation - big guns, lots of bluster and "experts" and all the stops

pulled out to maintain the status quo and never take responsibility. It is not ok.

“The only way people have been able to get clean water, to get compensated for the damage, the cancers that have been caused, is to go into our court system and try to fight this out in court for years. It is almost as though there is this intentional system of roadblocks baked into the system.” Robert Bilott - attorney in the PFAS/Dupont case

A Call to Action: PFAS are not essential chemicals, they are unnecessary

1. We live by the Precautionary Principle. No ambivalence. The onus is not on us to prove harm, the onus is on the Corporations to prove that products are safe. All legislation and permitting should follow this principle. People over Profits.
2. We monitor all people, creatures, soil, water and air. Routinely. No special exemptions to see if it is "necessary". We monitor aka test food, beverages. We test for specific organisms in many foods. Add pfas to the list. Test the packaging. Test the Cans. This is an investment in our health. The health of our grandchildren and great grandchildren. We should be embarrassed by the state of the world we are leaving for them. They should be outraged by us.
3. The landfill, the **ONLY** landfill in the State should be closed! The risk of it expanding further in such a precarious location is not worth it. Pretending that "treated leachate" from the "pretreatment pilot project" is water (that officially we know nothing about, despite the rules of transparency), is delusional. Leachate should **never** run into any waterways, watersheds or bodies of water. Just because we think it looks clean does not make it so. Remembering that **we don't know what we don't know** is vital. Alternatives to the landfill should have been created 20 years ago. They weren't! An immediate alternative should be found.
4. Immediately ban the class of pfas chemicals. Every one.
5. Ban herbicide and pesticide spraying. Whatever chemical ingredients are in any pesticides **MUST** be disclosed.
6. No Biosolids spread on land unless proved to be safe.

7. End sewage and wastewater overflows and seriously consider whether the discharge of effluent into waterways is a safe practice. Bodily waste contains pfas and other harmful chemicals

Water is the world's scarcest and most valuable resource. We cannot afford to risk it ever again.

As Rachel Carson pointed out over 60 years ago, "If, having endured much, we have at last asserted our 'right to know,' and if by knowing, we have concluded that we are being asked to take senseless and frightening risks, then we should no longer accept the counsel of those who tell us that we must fill our world with poisonous chemicals; we should look about and see what other course is open to us."

The Coalition's demands for action are the "other course" that Vermont legislators must choose to take in the near future, before it is too late.

A few links to worthwhile articles. If you can only face one go for the first - an entertaining as well as serious rap song. Music for social change is a powerful tool. Thank you for listening today.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q06fUMT_U4

https://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2021/11/17/epa-two-types-of-pfas-far-more-toxic-than-previously-understood/?fbclid=IwAR3JB_Q_HecWymk3c1cCpFehMP4gPrjqXzViZHy_e5H_EPjvR5ok1XNipfuA

https://www.vpr.org/npr-news/2022-04-10/landfills-farmers-wastewater-treatment-plants-push-back-on-proposed-ban-on-sludge-spreading?fbclid=IwAR2qt2bdSQQXXG_gy4ql3BB37ba3gsbprYPZj3YqLwZVKAyYBNt09gzTVxo

<https://waldo.villagesoup.com/2022/05/01/maine-is-first-in-the-nation-to-ban-spreading-of-pfas-sludge-and-compost/?fbclid=IwAR327Xo7inatPAdmB9vZB-w4i9YuCszk6w07xCO29PxhhJmWWMFn8WYZ7YMs>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2020.612320/full?f>

bclid=IwAR3wf_2B9khU71ICP5U77em5cfpytHOPzIFvtgmmpCW2mQBO6d4T_dBZCN4

https://www.whqr.org/local/2022-04-21/research-suggests-alligators-a-sentinel-species-for-pfas-impacts-are-losing-their-superhuman-healing-abilities?fbclid=IwAR09e_xZrVBqSlyjSn0HwzLHU0qHOVWRwwySKh4I50_rAI15AwD4lcaqNhw

<https://www.vpr.org/vpr-news/2022-04-26/casellas-dominance-in-the-northeast-leads-to-monopoly-concerns-in-vermont>

<https://pfastoxdatabase.org/>

<https://collaboratory.unc.edu/news/2022/04/22/podcast-dr-jamie-dewitt-speaks-about-pfas-and-health-effects-on-the-immune-system/?fbclid=IwAR1FivjSQWhdR49Cwxn1IL0Z3NSMy4fMuRAFT4qnzF0ZDzJHkxeRHnXoAiY>

- [PFAS Central – a project of Green Science Policy](#)
- [PFAS Central – PFAS-Free Products](#)
- [PFAS Chemicals – Environmental Working Group](#)